

Abdication of King Edward VIII

The message communicates His former Majesty's final and irrevocable decision to renounce the throne to which he succeeded on the death of his father, and sets forth the instrument of abdication executed by King Edward VIII on that day. Originals of the instrument of abdication and of the message, each signed in His former Majesty's own hand, were forwarded by command of King Edward VIII, by letter, from Buckingham palace, on December 10, 1936, to His Excellency the Governor General.

The text of the instrument of abdication and of His former Majesty's message were communicated by cable to His Excellency the Governor General on the morning of December the 10th, 1936, and immediately communicated by His Excellency to his ministers.

The originals of the message and of the instrument of abdication are under my hand at the moment. It is my intention, unless hon. members of either the Senate or the Commons should otherwise direct, to have them deposited for safe custody in the office of the Privy Council.

I place in your hands, Mr. Speaker, to be read to hon. members and to be retained among the records of this house, a photostatic copy of each of these documents.

Mr. SPEAKER: The documents are as follows:

Instrument of Abdication

I, Edward the Eighth, of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Emperor of India, do hereby declare my irrevocable determination to renounce the throne for myself and for my descendants, and my desire that effect should be given to this instrument of abdication immediately.

In token whereof I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of December, nineteen hundred and thirty six, in the presence of the witnesses whose signatures are subscribed.

Signed at
Fort Belvedere
in the presence
of
Albert
Henry
George

EDWARD R. I.

After long and anxious consideration, I have determined to renounce the throne to which I succeeded on the death of my father, and I am now communicating this, my final and irrevocable decision. Realizing as I do the gravity of this step, I can only hope that I shall have the understanding of my peoples in the decision I have taken and the reasons which have led me to take it. I will not enter now into my private feelings, but I would beg that it should be remembered that the burden which constantly rests upon the shoulders of a sovereign

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

is so heavy that it can only be borne in circumstances different from those in which I now find myself. I conceive that I am not overlooking the duty that rests on me to place in the forefront the public interest, when I declare that I am conscious that I can no longer discharge this heavy task with efficiency or with satisfaction to myself.

I have accordingly this morning executed an instrument of abdication in the terms following:—

"I, Edward VIII, of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Emperor of India, do hereby declare my irrevocable determination to renounce the throne for myself and for my descendants, and my desire that effect should be given to this instrument of abdication immediately.

In token whereof I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of December, nineteen hundred and thirty-six, in the presence of the witnesses whose signatures are subscribed.

(Signed) Edward R. I."

My execution of this instrument has been witnessed by my three brothers, Their Royal Highnesses the Duke of York, the Duke of Gloucester and the Duke of Kent.

I deeply appreciate the spirit which has actuated the appeals which have been made to me to take a different decision, and I have, before reaching my final determination, most fully pondered over them. But my mind is made up. Moreover, further delay cannot but be most injurious to the peoples whom I have tried to serve as Prince of Wales and as king and whose future happiness and prosperity are the constant wish of my heart.

I take my leave of them in the confident hope that the course which I have thought it right to follow is that which is best for the stability of the throne and empire and the happiness of my peoples. I am deeply sensible of the consideration which they have always extended to me both before and after my accession to the throne and which I know they will extend in full measure to my successor.

I am most anxious that there should be no delay of any kind in giving effect to the instrument which I have executed and that all necessary steps should be taken immediately to secure that my lawful successor, my brother, His Royal Highness the Duke of York, should ascend the throne.

Edward R.I.

10th December, 1936.

ALTERATION IN THE LAW TOUCHING THE SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 1, respecting alteration in the law touching the succession to the throne.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.